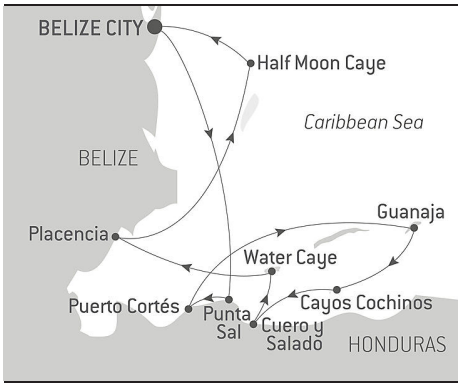
Belize and Honduras: unexpected encounters and nature

From **12/12/2023** to **19/12/2023**	Ship: ***LE DUMONT-D'URVILLE***	From **Belize City** to **Belize City**



Set off on an **all-new expedition cruise** aboard *Le Dumont-d'Urville* into the heart of the lush landscapes and hypnotic shores of Honduras and Belize. Spend 8 days falling under the spell of the verdant tropical forest and mangrove scenery, and the shades of blue found in the region's sea and lagoons. From port to port, encounters with the local populations will punctuate your journey into the heart of the Caribbean.

During your odyssey aboard *Le Dumont-d'Urville,* expect to hear birdsong and see dense tropical forests and the intertwined roots of mangrove burgeoning with life. From **Punta Sal**, you will explore the **Jeannette Kawas National Park**, a haven of peace where the forest melts into the sea, allowing you to contemplate unique biodiversity.You will make a port of call at **Puerto Cortès**, the main maritime port in Honduras and the departure point for accessing the **San Fernando de Omoa** fortress. You will then explore a completely undiscovered island, **Guanaja,** which is full of treasures. Just its former name, the *green island*, is enough to conjure up its many gems. Here you will discover the **Caracoles people,** who take pride in their traditions, on the **small key of Bonacca, also known as The Cay**, with its mangroves, tropical rainforests and sandy beaches sheltering rich wildlife.

A little further on, the Bay Islands and the **Cayos Cochinos** will surprise you with their immense coral reef, where protected access is regulated by a local research foundation. The idyllic shores here are amongst the most beautiful in the Caribbean. In the **Cuero y Salado Wildlife Reserve**, you will be able to sail through the primary mangrove forest in a Zodiac dinghy, in search of the many birds, howler monkeys and small caimans that live there.

The stunning nature here will reveal itself in the heart of a Caribbean atmosphere imbued with history and tradition. The Garifuna people will welcome you on the small island of Chachauate in the **Cayos Cochinos** with a unique performance, a visit of their village and the possibility of tasting their singular gastronomy. In the small town of **Placencia**, a

perfect spot to spend a moment relaxing on the main street running along the seafront, you will be able to hear all about the **Mopan** and **Kekchi** Mayan civilisations, a fascinating story that is inextricably linked to the region. You will also fall in love with its many mangroves and its exceptional sea beds. You will discover the local arts and crafts throughout your journey, thus learning about the heritage of these Caribbean shores. You will discover the local arts and crafts throughout your journey, thus learning about the heritage of these Caribbean shores.

Half Moon Caye, the picture postcard view of Belize, is also on the programme of this cruise; in this enchanting place, you will be able to see nesting frigatebirds and red-footed boobies close up. The **Great Blue Hole** cenote, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the world's most stunning diving sites. On **Water Caye**, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System is also teeming with many treasures for those who venture into its waters.



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YOUR STOPOVERS :

BELIZE CITY

Embarkation 12/12/2023 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Departure 12/12/2023 at 7:00 pm

Belize City is the former capital and the country's largest town. Located on the **Caribbean Sea**, this lively little town symbolises the fusion of British, Spanish and Maya cultures. The departure point for **flights over the Great Blue Hole and the barrier reef**, it's also the ideal gateway for discovering the treasures of Maya architecture: in the heart of the jungle, the grandiose and mysterious ruins of temples and palaces at the Lamanai and Xunantunich sites await you. Another unmissable experience: a trip to the mouth of the **Belize River**: with a little luck and care, you'll get a glimpse of manatees, dolphins, crocodiles, iguanas and many aquatic bird species.

PUNTA SAL

Arrival 13/12/2023
Departure 13/12/2023

In the municipality of Tela lies **Punta Sal National Park**, renamed Jeannette Kawas as a tribute to the environmental activist murdered in 1995. Between coral reef and green jungle, the park unveils a succession of white sandy coves along its coastline giving onto crystal-clear waters in a marvellous palette of blues. Inland, the tropical forest unfurls, a real reserve for wildlife that you will be able to explore in a Zodiac dinghy between mangroves, lagoons and rivers.

PUERTO CORTÉS

Arrival 13/12/2023
Departure 13/12/2023

In the hollow of the **Gulf of Honduras**, Puerto Cortés is the largest seaport in this country, which only recently opened up to tourism but possesses many natural and cultural riches. Its 650 km of coastline on **the Caribbean Sea** are bordered with sandbanks and deltas of small coastal rivers, while its waters have **many reefs and cays** to explore. Puerto Cortés is the departure point for discovering the impressive **San Fernando de Omoa fortress**, which was built in brick and coral by the Spanish authorities in the middle of the 18th century and is now a museum of history and archaeology.

GUANAJA

Arrival 14/12/2023
Departure 14/12/2023

The island of **Guanaja** is a little-known paradise, one of Honduras' real treasures, and will reveal itself to you between lush vegetation, idyllic deserted beaches and unique encounters with the local population of Bonacca (also known as The Cay). Off the coast, the wildest and most remote of the **Bay Islands** rolls out its coral reefs, which attract diving enthusiasts from around the world. This jewel of the Caribbean Sea also shelters a mangrove whose secrets you will attempt to discover as you explore it during a Zodiac outing. Then, during hikes, accompanied by our team of naturalist-guides, you will enter the heart of a rainforest dotted with majestic waterfalls and home to many bird species, like macaws. Here, the Caracoles people will welcome you and share their traditions with you on the small key of **Bonacca (also known as The Cay)**. Do not miss this exceptional encounter!

CAYOS COCHINOS

Arrival 15/12/2023
Departure 15/12/2023

Lying northeast of La Ceiba, **the Bay Islands** are home to certain treasures that float on a palette of turquoise, dark or celadon blues. **Les Cayos Cochinos**, an archipelago made up of two islands, *Cayo Menor* and *Cayo Grande*, and thirteen coral cays, is one of them. Situated on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System in a marine reserve created in 1994, its underwater scenery features coral gardens in which multitudes of tropical fish scatter and provide you with a feast for the eyes. In this idyllic setting, you will infinitely enjoy swimming while other water-based activities will offer a delightful interlude in the heart of exceptional nature.

CUERO Y SALADO

Arrival 16/12/2023
Departure 16/12/2023

In the heart of the Central American isthmus, Honduras is a little-known paradise boasting rich biodiversity, as evidenced by the **Cuero y Salado National Park**, a real refuge for wildlife created in 1987. This magnificent reserve, located on the **estuaries of the Cuero**, **Salado and San Juan rivers**, will provide you with fantastic opportunities for observing fauna and the plant kingdom. In a boat going across the **mangrove**, accompanied by the song of birds answering each other, you will not tire of observing the **bright plumage** livening up the thick green forest with bursts of colour. As you watch the **monkeys dancing from branch to branch**, you will not know which way to turn. And if you are lucky, turtles and caimans will also make an appearance.

WATER CAYE, ISLA UTILA

Arrival 16/12/2023
Departure 16/12/2023

The **Bay Islands** archipelago is home to stunning cays, sheltered **coral islets** with warm, crystal-clear turquoise waters. Off the island of Utila, the white-sand beaches lined with palms and coconut trees and the reefs of the deserted islet called **Water Caye** offer a picture-postcard setting that will delight fans of swimming and snorkelling.

PLACENCIA

Arrival 17/12/2023
Departure 17/12/2023

Placencia beckons travellers with the opalescence of its idyllic beaches and the blue hues of the Caribbean Sea that edges it. Lying in the south of Belize, in the **Stann Creek District**, this former fishing village exudes an **Afro-Caribbean atmosphere** in an unspoiled paradise combining brightly-coloured traditional houses and enchanting scenery. A veritable nature sanctuary both on land and at sea, Placencia has become an increasingly popular **eco-destination** in the Caribbean, particularly with diving and marine life enthusiasts. Its stunning lagoon is home to manatees, saltwater crocodiles and dolphins, among others, as well as numerous species of tropical fish. In addition to an excursion into the mangrove and some snorkelling, you will be able to discover the **Mopan** and **Kekchi** Mayan civilisations.

HALF MOON CAYE

Arrival 18/12/2023
Departure 18/12/2023

The tropical green crescent of **Half Moon Caye** is a natural monument of Belize stretching out over crystal-clear waters. The appeal of the oldest protected marine and ornithological area in Central America stems from its beaches lined with coconut trees, but most importantly from its **incredible underwater world**, which you will be able to explore with fins, mask and snorkel. Corals, sponges, sea turtles, spotted eagle rays, eels and groupers live in the turquoise waters, while on land the **coastal forest** is home to amusing geckos and a large colony of red-footed boobies, spectacular divers that penetrate the water at high speed to feed on small fish and squid.

BELIZE CITY

Arrival 19/12/2023 early morning
Disembarkation 19/12/2023 at 6:30 am

Belize City is the former capital and the country's largest town. Located on the **Caribbean Sea**, this lively little town symbolises the fusion of British, Spanish and Maya cultures. The departure point for **flights over the Great Blue Hole and the barrier reef**, it's also the ideal gateway for discovering the treasures of Maya architecture: in the heart of the jungle, the grandiose and mysterious ruins of temples and palaces at the Lamanai and Xunantunich sites await you. Another unmissable experience: a trip to the mouth of the **Belize River**: with a little luck and care, you'll get a glimpse of manatees, dolphins, crocodiles, iguanas and many aquatic bird species.